(a) whether there is a vast scope to promote tourism in the tribal areas and forest areas of the country;

(b) whether steps have been taken in that direction in various States;

(c) if so, the State-wise details thereof; and

(d) the specific steps taken in that direction in Orissa particularly in Keonjhar undivided Kalahandi, Koraput and Phulbani districts?

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF TOURISM (SHRI SRIKANTA KUMAR JENA): (a) to (c) The development of tourism in specific areas is primarily the responsibility of the State Government. The Government of India provide financial assistance to implement specific projects conforming to approved guidelines on the basis of proposals received from the concerned State Governments and availability of funds. However, there is no separate scheme for the promotion of tourism in tribal and forest areas.

(d) The financial assistasnce provided by the Government of India for tourism projects in these districts include the following:—

(i) Visitors Centre at Kalahandi

(ii) Tourist Complex at Koraput

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO UNSTARRED QUESTIONS

route sharing with major Airlines by Air India

2171. SHRI SANJAY DALMIA: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news item captioned "Air India Plans route sharing with major airlines" appearing in the Times of India dated April 24, 1997;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reaction of Government thereto; and

(c) tthe gains likely to be accrued to Air India by this alliance agreement in the short-run as well as in the long run?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI C. M. IBRAHIM): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Air India has concluded a Co-operative Services Agreement with Air France, which envisages operation of 6 additional frequencies by Air France in a phased manner by Summer 2000 between India and Paris. Air India will be allowed a block of 40 economy class and 4 Club class seats at an agreed price on these flights. Under the arrangement, Air India will also be able to code-share on Air France's flights to other destinations using Paris as a hub.

Air India has also entered into a Frame Work Agreement with Singapore Airlines which envisages an increase in the capacity entitlement by 6 B-747 units for each side by Summer 2000. This additional entitlement is linked to a code-sharing arrangement between Air India and Singapore Airlines under which Singapore Airlines will make available to Air India a block of seats on their flights to points in the West Coast of USA, Australia, New Zealand and Canada, at an agreed price. This agreement is being placed before the Government for approval.

Air India has also entered into Co-operative Services Arrangements with United Airlines, Gulf Air, Scandinavian Airlines System, Kuwait Airways, Air Mauritius, Malayasian Airlines, and Austrian Airlines. It is also examining the possibility of entering into such an Agreement with Continental Airlines to cater to the India/US market.

(c) The arrangements help Air India to expand its network and market reach without heavy investments. In the short run, it also serves as a bridge mechanism to meet Air India's expansion objectives till it is able to augment its own fleet.